

Dunga comes good at last

LOS ANGELES, July 18: Dunga, more used to contempt than adulation, made a remarkable transformation from villain to hero after leading by example in Brazil's World Cup victory, reports AFP.

Their 3-2 penalty shootout win over Italy, following a 0-0 scoreline after extra time, was competed by Dunga, who hit the ball firmly to the right while Italian goalkeeper Gianluca Pagliuca went left.

Dunga was an inspiration in midfield. He continually won balls, defended solidly, and sparked off a host of attacking forays.

On the eve of the final, Dunga had been described by Pele, the greatest ever player, as "the heart of the Brazil side."

And it was Brazil's pulsating heart that saw them win the trophy for a record fourth time.

Though Dunga's rugged determination has won him many admirers in Europe, South Americans value flair and technical ability way above courage and bravery. And he does not play the "beautiful game" most Brazilians prize.

But coach Carlos Alberto Parreira, shrewd enough to know his value, struck by the Stuttgart player. Some detractors, including 1970 Brazilian midfielder Gerson, said the 30-year-old Stuttgart player was too slow for an international midfielder.

"If we win, no one will care how we did it," he said.

Dunga does. It was his goal that counted.

Penalties: Shot for shot

PASADENA, July 18 (Reuters): It was a nail-biting but ultimately disappointing way to decide the World Cup. Following are details of the penalty shoot-out which ended in a 3-2 victory for Brazil on Sunday.

FIRST ROUND

Franco Baresi, Italy, missed: Italy 0, Brazil 0.

Italian skipper Baresi who had an outstanding 120-minutes back in the side after missing four games through injury, took Italy's opening penalty but skied his right foot shot high over the Brazilian bar without even forcing goalkeeper Taffarel to make a move.

Marcio Santos, Brazil, saved: Italy 0, Brazil 0.

Marcio Santos fired to goalkeeper Gianluca Pagliuca's right, but the Italian guessed correctly and saved his right-foot shot with an athletic dive.

SECOND ROUND

Demetrio Albertini, Italy, scored: Italy 1, Brazil 0.

Albertini shot wide of Taffarel, giving the goalkeeper no chance for the first goal of the shoot-out.

Romario, Brazil, scored: Italy 1, Brazil 1.

Romario, who could have won the game for Brazil when he screwed the ball wide of the net in extra time, finally got the ball in the net in the shoot-out, but only just. His stop-start run-up ended with the ball cracking the inside of the post before finding the net.

THIRD ROUND

Alberigo Evani, Italy, scored: Italy 2, Brazil 1.

Substitute Evani blasted his spot-kick into the middle of the goal and scored with Brazilian goalkeeper Taffarel already committed to the dive, moving out of the way of the shot.

Branco, Brazil, scored: Italy 2, Brazil 2.

Branco, the Brazilian free-kick specialist, scored with a left-foot drive, beating Pagliuca hollow.

FOURTH ROUND

Daniele Massaro, Italy, saved: Italy 2, Brazil 2.

Massaro, like his skipper Baresi, was recalled for this match, and like his skipper missed a penalty. He appeared to take a too causal run-up and his shot was saved with relative ease by Taffarel diving to his left.

Dunga, Brazil, scored: Italy 2, Brazil 3.

The Brazilian skipper put his side ahead for the first time with a right-foot shot that sent Pagliuca the wrong way for what was to prove the winning goal of the 1994 World Cup final.

FIFTH ROUND

Roberto Baggio, Italy, missed: Italy 2, Brazil 3.

Baggio, who had almost single-handedly kept Italy on course for the final with his goalscoring exploits in the second half of the tournament, was now faced with keeping his team in this game. If he missed, Italy were beaten, if he scored, the shoot-out would continue.

He ballooned his penalty shot over the bar as Baresi had done at the start of the shoot-out, then stood forlornly alone, hands on hips, as the Brazilians rejoiced.

For sheer entertainment,



EAGER TO HAVE A FEEL OF IT ... Mazinho holds the World Cup high while Zinho awaits his turn as the triumphant Brazilians cavort round the pitch after the final at the Pasadena Rose Bowl on July 17. — AFP photo

Anticlimactic finale to an exuberant World Cup



PASADENA, Calif.

July 18: More goals, more fans and more excitement. It was a good championship — except for the anticlimactic final. And, unfortunately, that may be the image many remember from the 1994 World Cup, reports AP.

From great goals like Saudi Arabia Saeed Owairan's slalom through the Belgian defence to Roberto Baggio's coronary-creating late scores to beat Nigeria and Spain, everybody seemed to have their moment in the sun, and the heat. The World Cup generated enough excitement and enthusiasm that it might have even given soccer a chance to make a break through in the United States.

But it may take several days to judge what damage the 0-0 draw and penalty-kick victory by Brazil over Italy did to the overall image of the World Cup. It was only the third goalless draw in 52 games, almost half the number of 0-0 draws at the 1990 World Cup in Italy (five).

But credit the rules changes, the crowd or planets being in the right alignment, for 51 games the 1994 World Cup seemed like a blur of excitement.

It started on the very first day when South Korea, trailing by two goals with five minutes to play, scored twice against Spain to miraculously pull out a 2-2 draw.

There was Owairan's goal, arguably the best of the tournament. Twisting, jumping and dribbling past four Belgian defenders — and goalkeeper Michel Preud'homme — he gave underdog Saudi Arabia a 1-0 victory.

It was one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history and put Saudi Arabia, a World Cup debutante, into the second round. It also finished off what the Saudis nearly accomplished in their first game when they led the Netherlands early only to allow two second-half goals and lose 2-1.

There was the run of the Bulgarians, who coming into the tournament had ever won a World Cup game in 16 tries — and then made it all the way to the semifinals. The big shock came in the quarterfinals when Hristo Stoichkov and Yordan Letchkov scored three minutes apart late in the second half to stun defending champions Germany 2-1.

Stoichkov's 30-metre free kick skirted just over the wall and into the upper corner of the net, only to be outdone by Letchkov's flying header into the other corner.

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200,000-seat Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro to fill.

The crowds also enjoyed the American team, which for the first time since 1950 won a World Cup game when it beat Colombia 2-1 in the first round.

The quarterfinal meeting between the Netherlands and Brazil also provided non-stop, endline-to-endline action, but only for the last 45 minutes. After a dull, lifeless first half in a matchup that was billed as a game for the ages, Brazil samba-ed their way to a 2-0 lead only to see the Dutch storm back and tie with a pair of goals.

Given the chance to choke, Brazil ignored the ghosts of World Cups past, calmed themselves and went on to win 3-2.

In all, Romario and Bebeto combined for eight goals and conjured the inevitable comparisons to the 1970 champions.

Italy, too, reclaimed a piece of their World Cup lost thanks to the individual talent of Roberto Baggio.

Greece's absolutely abysmal performance may only have set that country's progress back.

Norway hadn't appeared in a World Cup since 1938, and after playing a totally defensive style through three games, some were suggesting they shouldn't return for another 56 years.

Ireland's play was tarnished by a defensive style and then Pat Bonner's inexcusable mistake when he let a seemingly harmless shot from Wim Jonk get through him in a 2-0 loss to the Netherlands in the second round.

And while the final may not have settled the issue, many believe the outcome was the correct one. Brazil were favoured throughout the tournament because they played the best soccer.

The Brazilians attacked and went forward, with a tight passing game instead of long balls. They overcame two concerted attempts to play for a penalty kick shootout: the first by the Americans before a very partisan US Independence Day crowd; and again by the Swedes in the semifinals.

However, penalty kicks did end up deciding the final. It was the fourth final to go to extra time and the first to be decided on penalty kicks. With any luck, it also will be the last (1990).

Clinton greets Parreira

MIAMI, July 18: President Clinton telephoned Brazilian soccer coach Carlos Alberto Parreira late Sunday to congratulate him for a victory in the World Cup championship, reports AP.

"You won a wonderful championship in a hard-fought game," Clinton told Parreira, according to Press Secretary Dee Myers.

Clinton made the call from Air Force One while en route from Washington to Miami, where he is giving a speech Monday.

Myers said the president had watched the entire championship game between Brazil and Italy at the White House.

Homeward bound

PASADENA, July 18: Brazil, rejoicing over a record fourth World Cup triumph, fly home to join the celebrations on Monday while their defeated Italian rivals face the long haul across the Atlantic, reports Reuters.

Some of the Brazilian players plan a trip to Disneyland on Monday before taking off from California in the afternoon.

First stop is Recife in the north-east of the country — an area where the national team has long enjoyed loyal support — for a victory parade on Tuesday.

The samba driven party is expected to continue later in the week when the weary heroes finally reach Rio de Janeiro. While the Brazilian players luxuriate in a triumph secured 3-2 on penalties after the first goalless final ever, the Italians will have plenty of time to ponder their errors.

Franco Baresi, Daniele Massaro and Roberto Baggio are sure to replay those missed penalties over and over again in their minds during the 14-hour flight home.

The squad will go their own ways once they get home with no officials reception planned, although it would be a surprise if soccer-loving Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi decided not to honour their performance in some way.

Coach Arrigo Sacchi joked this weekend that his players, who have battled their way through adversity to the final, should at least be spread the barrage of rotten fruit which has greeted less successful teams on their arrival at Rome's Fiumicino airport.

Both squads have been together for two months preparing for and competing in the World Cup and would doubtless welcome a few weeks' rest and relaxation.

But with soccer now virtually an all-year occupation, there will be little time for lounging on the beach.

Brazilian clubs are in action in the Libertadores Cup from next week while the European clubs are already limbering up for the new domestic season.

Brazilian goalkeeper Claudio Taffarel, whose penalty save from Massaro helped Brazil take the trophy, must find a new club once the dust has settled.

His clam of persecution by FIFA only hurt him more.

The tournament's on-the-field low moments included Brazilian defender Leonardo's vicious elbow that fractured US midfielder Tab Ramos' skull.

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Parreira on top of world

Mario Zagalo, successful in 1970, is not held in high esteem by many in Brazil who say that the real architect of the team was Joao Saldanha, deposed as coach weeks before the tournament began.

Zagalo, treated with far greater reverence outside

adept at winning the ball but low on creativity.

The most difficult period in his time in charge came after Brazil lost a World Cup qualifier in Bolivia. For weeks he was caricatured by cartoonists and Brazilian commentators.

"I don't think Brazilians in general have realised the hard and honest work Parreira put in. They should thank God we have a coach like him. Few would have put up with what he's had to endure," said Romario.

Praise indeed from a player who was left out in the cold for eight months by Parreira last year for indiscipline.

Reserve goalkeeper Gilmar said: "He's the ideal person for the job. He didn't get disheartened, even when the going got tough and when they were dirty to him."

Parreira, who never played professional soccer, began his career as Brazil's physical trainer at the 1970 World Cup. "At the start, I never even dreamed of becoming a football coach."

The dream only came true when he was offered a coaching position in Ghana shortly afterwards.

He progressed and was in charge of the Kuwait team which performed creditably at the 1982 World Cup finals in Spain.

A year later he had his first stint in charge of the Brazilian national team. It was not a happy experience and he resigned after a year.

In 1990 he was again at the World Cup in charge of the United Arab Emirates.

The day before Brazil's victory in the final he said that success would not change him.

"Whether you are getting criticism or praise, you have to be the same person. I'm the same as I was two months ago and this is important for me."

Taffarel — a rider in storm

PASADENA, Calif., July 18: With the pressure of a nation on his shoulders, Taffarel gave 160 million Brazilians their dream, reports AP.

Most of the year, the 28-year-old is in Europe, where he spent four seasons in the Italian First Division. Parma, a middle-sized club, didn't want him after the 1992-93 season and dealt him to tiny Reggiana, one of Italy's underdog clubs.

But that was history now. And Italy were sending up more shooters hoping to snatch that elusive fourth Cup.

Masaro, who got Italy to the second round of the World Cup with a goal against Mexico, sent shot to Taffarel's left. The goalkeeper parried the ball to safety.

Now Dunga scored, putting Brazil up 3-2 and bringing on Roberto Baggio — the best player in the whole wide world.

Taffarel stared. Baggio put the ball over the crossbar. The goalkeeper jumped high, Baggio fell, looking like he had been mortally wounded.

Seconds later, Taffarel was running around the field with the Brazilian flag atop his head. In Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and the rest of Brazil, millions ran into the streets.

The most-watched game in history was over. Taffarel had won. Both teams — and both nations — will live with that for the rest of their lives.

Germany, USA neck & neck

DUBLIN, July 18: Germany and USA were battling it out at the top of Group 4 after the fifth day of the women's hockey World Cup here Sunday, reports AFP.

Germany beat England a comprehensive 3-0 to leave the English women, still without a win, wallowing in fifth place above bottom placed Canada.